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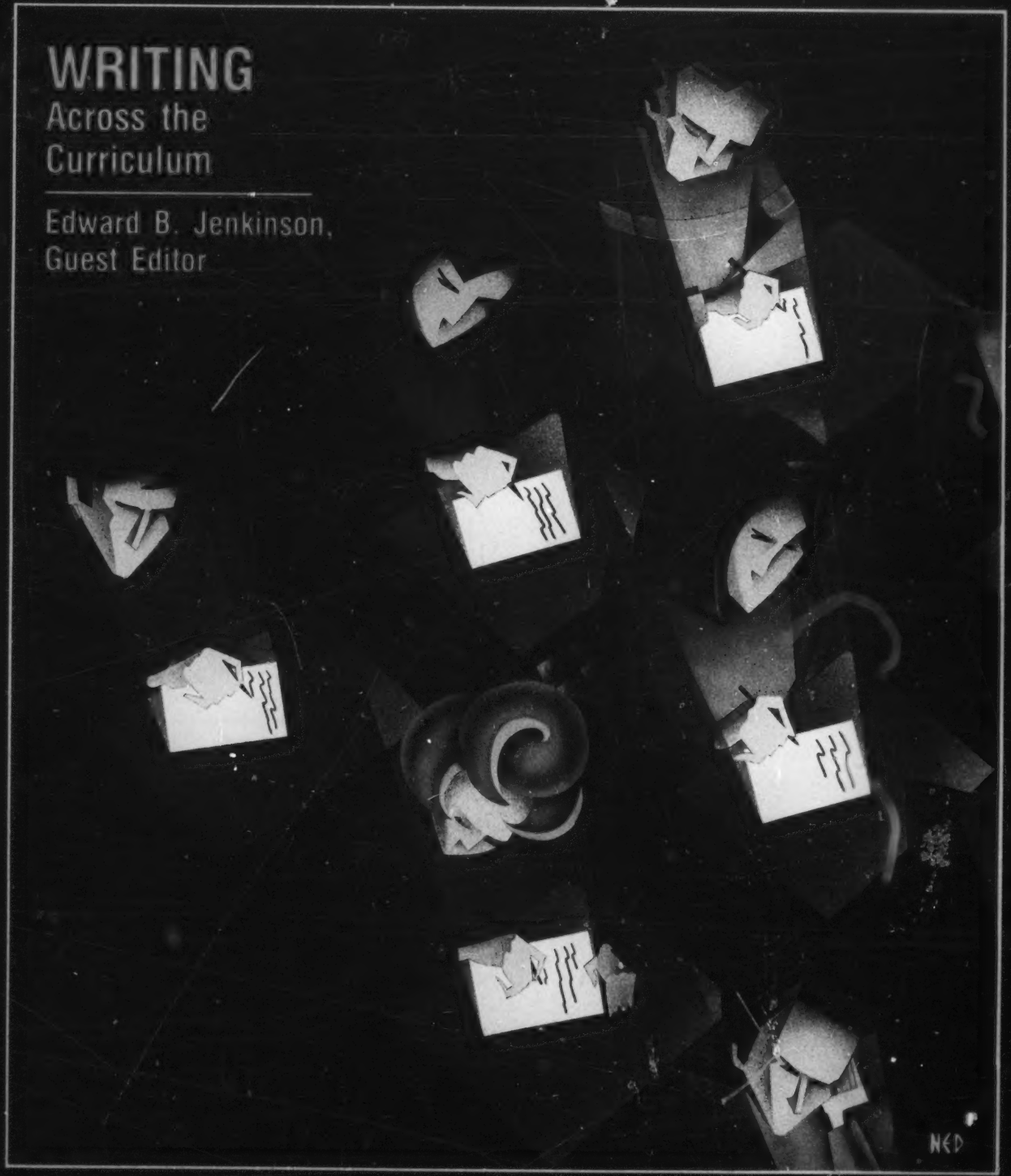
PHI DELTA KAPPAN JUNE 1988

KAPPAN

WRITING
Across the Curriculum

Edward B. Jenkinson,
Guest Editor



Rhino Fever: Catch It!

FOR A DOZEN years, the sleek limestone rhinoceros stood guard in front of a Bloomington art gallery. To adults, the contemporary sculpture was a familiar and appealing part of the near-downtown landscape. To children, it was a cool perch on hot Indiana afternoons.

But sculptor C. R. Schiefer took his rhino home to Morgan County last September, after another of his works – on loan to a high school in a nearby community – was destroyed by vandals. When the 23 middle-schoolers enrolled in Bloomington's Harmony School read a newspaper account of Schiefer's action, they decided to prove a point: young people can treat art objects responsibly.

The middle-schoolers began a yearlong campaign to give the $6,000 rhino a new home on the Harmony grounds. Elementary and high school students at Harmony quickly joined the campaign, which eventually captured the imagination of the entire community.

First, the students wrote three fliers, describing the campaign for three different audiences: Indiana University fraternities, local businesses, and members of the community at large. Just before Halloween, they went from house to house distributing the fliers and 3,500 miniature pumpkins (donated by a local farmer). That project brought $2,000 in donations.

Then a Harmony parent (and a *Kappan* illustrator), Jim Hull, created a "Red-Nosed Rhino" card, which students sold at holiday craft fairs in the community. At the same time, they sold raffle tickets for a miniature replica of the rhino, donated by Schiefer; a rhino drawing, donated by Hull; and a 16th-century woodcut of a rhino.

The raffle took place during a combined chili supper, student art fair (featuring rhinos, of course), and dance held at Harmony School on February 5, during National Rhinoceros Week. To advertise that event, the students created and distributed more fliers. They also contacted Rhino Records, a California firm, which donated 22 albums to a local radio station. The station played Rhino Records all week and plugged Rhino Day at Harmony School.

The raffle yielded about $1,500. A "Rhino Emporium" brought in another several hundred dollars from the sale of rhino T-shirts (middle-schooler Jeremy Baron came up with the winning design), rhino socks (created by a Harmony mother), and other items.

Then the Bloomington Arts Council asked Harmony students to apply for a grant. They did so – and added another $300 to the coffers.

On May 7, with $5,200 in hand and plans for summer car washes and other fund-raising activities in the making, Harmony students unveiled the rhino during an International Day festival held on their school grounds.

What did the youngsters learn from this project? Students Jeremy Baron and Holly Edson quickly ticked off a list for me: writing skills, math skills, public-speaking skills, problem-solving skills, management and organizational skills. "They learned about delayed gratification, as well," teacher Daniel Baron pointed out. They also learned a good deal about cooperation, about community service, about participatory democracy, and about the value of art in daily life.

They learned all of this because the Harmony teachers went to the trouble of teaching skills in contexts that gave students reasons for mastering them. And as they prepared the young for lifelong learning, they prepared them also to live richly and fully. The rest of us should celebrate such teachers, and teachers everywhere should emulate them. – PBG

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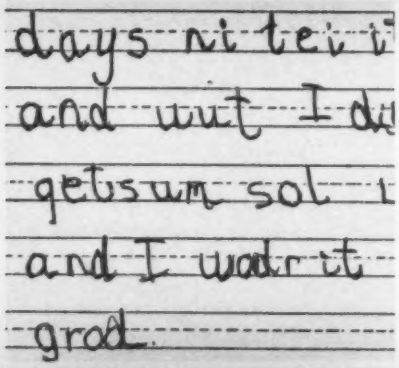

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Cover Illustration: Ned Shaw

Writing for Education Journals

Here are some timely answers to questions that nag at would-be writers.

BY KENNETH T. HENSON

IN THE COURSE of conducting workshops, I have the opportunity to speak directly to a few hundred professionals each year about their concerns related to writing for publication in professional journals. During each workshop, I collect questions from the participants. Though my audiences vary widely – ranging from professors, teachers, and librarians to businesspeople, health care professionals, and government employees – many of the questions they ask remain the same.

To enable me to offer timely answers to these recurring questions, I assemble a questionnaire every two years and mail it to the editors of some prominent education journals. Then I share the findings through articles such as this one. The information reported here is drawn from the 49 usable responses I received from a mailing of 65 questionnaires; the return rate was 75%.

One of the questions that nags at writers is, What motivates professional people to write for publication? While institutional pressure is brought to bear through the linking of tenure, promotions, and merit pay to publications, this pressure is not the only reason that professionals write. Each profession has its body of specialized knowledge, and most writers want to contribute new knowledge to that pool, thereby advancing the profession.

KENNETH T. HENSON (University of Alabama Chapter) heads the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa. In August he will assume the deanship of the College of Education at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond. *This article is an update of earlier articles that appeared in the May 1984* Kappan *and in the April 1986* Kappan.

Individuals who wish to publish must consider carefully the size and nature of the audience.

Whether in response to institutional pressure or out of a desire to share their professional knowledge, individuals who wish to publish must consider carefully the size and nature of the audience that will receive their message. The journals that I surveyed differ as much in circulation size as in type of audience. The readership of these journals ranges from as few as 200 to as many as 145,000.

Faced with such diversity, would-be writers often ask, To which journal should I submit my manuscript? For some professionals, only certain types of journal publications will "count." For purposes of promotion and tenure, for example, universities may consider only those publications by their faculty members that are research-based or that appear in refereed journals.

I found that 44% of all the articles in the 49 journals responding to my questionnaire report on research of some kind. Fully 95% of the journals regularly report research findings in some of their articles. Some of the journals publish only research articles, and 30% of the journals say that at least 90% of their articles report the authors' own research. These findings suggest that all writers should consider conducting research or surveys to gather data to use in their articles. The market for research-based articles is too large to be ignored by aspiring writers.

Determining a journal's refereed status is an elusive goal, however. Asking editors whether their journals are refereed is an almost pointless exercise, since the editors define *refereeing* differently. To get a better handle on this item, I asked the editors three questions: Is your journal refereed nationally (as opposed to in your office)? Is the refereeing process anonymous? Do you provide the referees with a rating instrument? Since I believe that all of these are important criteria for refereeing, I awarded one point for a yes answer to each. The results for each journal appear in Table 1.

Forty-four percent of the editors who responded to my questionnaire said that their journals are not refereed. Of those who claimed that their journals are refereed, 61% conduct the process nationally, 59% conduct the process anonymously, and 73% provide a rating instru-

TABLE 1.
Characteristics of a Selected Sample of Education Journals

	Number of Readers	Contributors Who Are University Personnel (%)	Referred	Theme Issues per Year	Research Articles (%)	Acceptance Rate (%)	Days to Answer Queries (Avg.)	Days to Acknowledge Receipt of Ms. (Avg.)	Weeks Required for Decision	Months Required for Publication	Preferred Length (in Ms. Pages)	Min./Max. Pages	Number of Photocopies Preferred	Required Style	Effect of Photos on Acceptance	Accept Dot-Matrix	Welcome Query Letters	Welcome Phone Calls
Academic Therapy	5,000	70	No	0	0	30	2	2	1	3-6	8	10	1	Chicago	Yes	Likely	Yes	Yes
Action in Teacher Education	3,500	75	3	25	50+	15	7	14	6	6-12	4-10	1-12	2	APA	Yes	None	No	Yes
Alabama ACD Journal	1,200	80	2	20	55	70	10	10	10	7	12	4-18	3	APA	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
American Biology Teacher	7,000	50	3	60	0	60	5	2	8	9	10	1-18	2	APA	No	Possibly	Yes	Yes
American Middle School Education	1,000	75	2	10	0	35	10	1	4-6	6-18	10	—	3	APA	No	Possibly	No	No
American Secondary Education	3,000	90	1	10	0	40	7	7	6-8	3-4	8-10	—	1	Campbell	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
Capstone Journal of Education	1,900	95	3	50	0	20-25	7	7	12-16	6	15	—	3	APA	No	None	Yes	—
Child Development	8,500	90	2	95	15	20	1	0	12	12	15	—	3	APA	No	None	Yes	—
Clearing House	2,500	90	3	50	10	50	7	7-10	12	6	8-10	—	0	Chicago	No	None	Yes	—
Comparative Education Review	2,400	80	2	90	0	15	5	5	8-10	6-10	30	20-35	2	Chicago	No	None	Yes	No
Computing Teacher	12,500	50	3	20	10	10	1-14	1-4	12	4-5	7-12	3-16	1	APA	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
Contemporary Education	1,000	60	2	25	50	5	0	7	1-4	12	12	1-20	3	APA	No	Possibly	Yes	—
Creative Child & Adult Quarterly	—	80	No	30	25	50	14	14	4-6	6	10	6-18	2	APA	—	Possibly	Yes	—
Delta Pi Epsilon Journal	8,000	—	2	80-90	0	25-30	14	14	12	3-6	7-17	7-17	4	APA	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
Eastern Education Journal	1,000	90	1	40	50	60	30	30	12	4	10	5-20	3	APA	Yes	Likely	—	Yes
Education	3,000	90	2	20	0	33	30	45	6	10	8-10	4-20	1	APA	Yes	Possibly	Yes	—
Educational Forum	48,000	75	3	10	0	10	5	5	8-12	3-6	10-20	—	3	Chicago	Yes	None	No	No
Educational Horizons	15,000	80	3	20	95	17	3	2	6-12	1-6	12-15	1-20	2	Chicago	Yes	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Educational Leadership	98,000	50	3	5	90	5	5	3	3-4	2-24	8-10	1-25	1	Chicago	No	Possibly	No	No
Educational Perspectives	500	75	2	5	100	5	10-15	10-15	46	—	10	6-20	2	Chicago	No	Definitely	Yes	Yes
Educational Record	10,000	95	2	7	40	10	14	3	8	6-12	10	5-14	1	Chicago	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
Educational Technology	5,000	60	No	20	—	40	7	7	2	6-12	10-12	6-25	1	APA	Yes	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Elementary School Journal	5,600	95	3	99	40	5	2	1	8	10-12	30	—	3	APA	No	None	Yes	Yes
High School Journal	2,000	98	3	75	0	4	30	5	8	12	12	5-18	2	APA	Yes	None	Yes	—
Journal of Educational Research	3,200	Most	2	100	0	20	10	30	12	6	25	30	2	APA	No	None	Yes	—
Journal of Experimental Education	1,600	98	3	98	0	25	—	15-30	6-8	3-6	20	—	2	APA	Yes	None	Yes	—
Journal of Instructional Psychology	200	90+	2	50-60	—	—	10	30	45	3-6	15-20	—	2	APA	Yes	None	Yes	No
Journal of Reading	19,000	60	3	25	12	18	3	7	8-10	6	15	1-20	3	Chicago	Yes	Possibly	—	—
Journal of Reading Behavior	2,000	85	3	99	25	20	—	0	12	3-6	—	—	3	APA	Yes	None	—	—
Journal of Res. in Science Teaching	2,000	90	2	99	0	50	14	14	20	4-6	—	—	2	APA	Yes	None	Yes	—
Journal of Teacher Education	7,000	95	3	50	30	10	5	5	8-12	3-6	15-20	10-30	3	APA	No	None	Yes	Yes
Middle School Journal	6,300	40	3	5-10	30	50	15	5	6	6	6-10	12	5	APA	—	None	Yes	Yes
NASSP Bulletin	40,000	60	No	15	—	18	5	1-3	3-4	6-18	12-15	8-18	1	Chicago	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
North Carolina English Teacher	1,000	35	1	12	25	70	10	10	12	18	—	3-20	1	MLA	Yes	None	Yes	—
Peabody Journal of Education	2,400	80	3	—	0	100*	5	5	—	2-3	20-25	15-45	—	APA	No	Possibly	—	—
Perceptual & Motor Skills	200	—	2	90	—	35	0	0	3-4	1	—	—	3	APA	No	Possibly	Yes	—
Phi Delta Kappan	145,000	52	No	25	25-30	5	5	1	8	6	15	25	0	Chicago	Yes	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Planning & Changing	700	90	2	50-75	—	40	5	5	6	6	18	10-24	—	APA	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
Principal	25,000	25	No	10	15	5	30	42	60	4-6	10-12	5-15	1	Chicago	No	Possibly	Yes	No
Psychological Reports	2,000	—	2	90	—	35	0	0	3-4	1	—	—	3	APA	No	Possibly	Yes	—
Reading Research Quarterly	9,700	30	3	90	0	10	—	7	12-16	6	30-40	—	4	APA	No	None	No	No
Reading Teacher	48,000	60	3	25	12	18	3	7	8-10	6	15	1-20	3	Chicago	Yes	Possibly	No	No
Review of Educational Research	—	75	3	100	0	5	2-3	2-3	8	3-6	50	—	3	APA	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
School Science & Mathematics	5,400	90	3	18	15	12	2	10	—	2-4	10-15	2-25	4	APA	No	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Social Studies	3,000	60	2	5	15	45	5	10	12	10	18-20	—	1	Chicago	No	Possibly	Yes	No
Teachers College Record	3,000	95	2	10	25	7	14	3	8	6-9	25	10-35	2	Chicago	—	None	Yes	No
Teacher Educator	2,200	80	2	70	0	10	2	2	6	6-9	10	6-16	1	—	No	None	Yes	Yes
Teaching/K-8	110,000	16	No	1	50	2	3	—	2+	—	4-5	—	0	U.S. Gov't.	Yes	None	No	No
Teaching & Learning	300	—	1	50-75	0	30	7	7	8	4	—	6-40	0	APA	Yes	None	Yes	No
Tech Trends	9,000	69	No	—	—	—	10	—	4-8	2-6	20	5-24	0	—	—	Possibly	Yes	No
Theory Into Practice	4,000	60	2	70	100	90*	10	1	4-12	10	15	10-18	2-3	APA	Yes	None	Yes	Yes
Vitae Scholasticae	200	95	2	100	—	80	5-7	5-7	8	3-6	15-30	5-100	1	Chicago	Yes	Possibly	Yes	Yes
Vocational Education Journal	48,000	10	3	5	85	10	14	10	8	4-5	8-10	—	1	—	Yes	Likely	Yes	No

*All or most articles are by invitation only.

ment for the referees. Forty-five percent of the 49 journals meet all three criteria.

Another question that authors often ask is whether they should submit manuscripts for theme issues – and whether doing so improves their chances of being published. I found that 60% of the journals in my survey publish theme issues; 17% of the responding editors said that at least 90% of the articles that they publish fit into themes, and 10% of the editors said that their journals print *only* theme issues. Thus aiming to publish in a theme issue seems like a good idea. Indeed, in order to publish in certain journals, writers *must* plan their writing with the journals' themes in mind. Those who wish to publish in professional journals would be well-advised to acquaint themselves with the journals' upcoming themes and to time the submission of their manuscripts accordingly.

One question of continuing interest to aspiring writers is, What are the rejection rates for various journals? The rejection rates for the journals I surveyed range from 30% to 98%, and the journals spread out pretty evenly across that range. One-third of the journals reject at least 90% of the manuscripts sent to them. Yet about one-fifth (21%) of the journals accept half or more of the manuscripts they receive. The average rejection rate for the journals in my survey is 72%.

Many writers feel some urgency about getting their manuscripts into print because of pending decisions on merit pay, promotions, or tenure. Therefore, I asked the editors how quickly they answer a query letter, acknowledge the arrival of a manuscript, and make a decision about publishing a manuscript.

Most editors respond quickly to query letters; the average turn-around time is 12 days. Likewise, most editors acknowledge the arrival of manuscripts promptly; the average time is 11 days. But deciding whether or not to publish a manuscript takes longer. (Remember that about one-third of the editors send manuscripts to outside reviewers.) Depending on the journal, a publishing decision can take anywhere from one week to 60 weeks; the average is 11 weeks.

Once an article is accepted, another – and much longer – period usually passes before the article is published. For those who have an urgent need to publish, knowing how long it takes a journal to make a publishing decision and then to actually publish an article is important. Table 1 provides this information for the 49 journals in my survey.

MY FINDINGS on questions involving time indicate that, whenever possible, authors should try to contact editors *before* mailing manuscripts to them. On the average, it takes 5½ times as long to get a response to a completed manuscript as it takes to get a response to a query letter. Therefore, if what an author has to say is particularly timely, sending a manuscript without first contacting the editor could mean that the information in the manuscript will be obsolete before it is published.

How do editors feel about having authors contact them? Nineteen percent of the editors in my survey do not want to receive phone calls or query letters about possible manuscripts. However, of those who do welcome inquiries, twice as many editors prefer query letters, which they can deal with at their convenience, to phone calls, which interrupt their working day.

A number of other factors can influence an author's chances of having a manuscript accepted for publication. Footnote style, the overall appearance of a manuscript, and the availability of photographs are among these factors. Almost two-thirds (60%) of the editors responding to my survey require APA (American Psychological Association) style, and about one-third (32%) require University of Chicago style. Ninety-one percent of the editors accept letter-quality printouts, and 57% accept manuscripts printed on a dot-matrix printer. More than one-third (36%) of the editors say that good black-and-white glossy photos of people performing tasks related to the topic of the article will increase the chances of acceptance.

The most frequent errors made by would-be contributors to these journals include lack of familiarity with the journals, sending manuscripts that don't contribute any new knowledge, and sending manuscripts that are poorly written. To avoid these mistakes, read the journal to which you intend to submit your manuscript and think carefully about the message that your manuscript conveys. What about the message is new and important to the readers of this particular journal? Think and rewrite until you can communicate your message and its importance clearly.

Finally, test your manuscript by asking a colleague to read it. Choose someone who is not directly involved with your work and who resembles the typical reader of the journal to which you intend to submit the manuscript. Then make whatever changes you deem necessary to accommodate your colleague's criticisms. The usefulness of this exercise more than makes up for any discomfort you may feel the first time you try it.

After you have done all of this, your fate will be in the hands of the editors and their advisors. But remember, editors are no more alike than writers. If your article is rejected, don't give up. Try, try again. K

"You're on your own now, so try to remain calm!"